DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 075 886 CS 500 262

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TITLE Women's Speech: Separate But Unequal?
PUB DATE Apr 73
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Assn. (Montreal, Canada, April 25-28, 1973)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Females; Individual Characteristics; Information Theory; Language Patterns; Language Styles; *Linguistic Competence; *Linguistic Performance; *Oral Communication; Research Needs; *Sex Differences

ABSTRACT

This paper considers the existing evidence of systems of co-occurring, sex-linked, linguistic signals in the United States. In the first section, the type of research which has been done in linguistic sex contrasts and then the relevant material in "folk linguistics" are discussed. In addition, a number of studies about the differences among men and women in vocabulary and pronunciation, grammatical forms, retention and comprehension of oral messages, and compressed speech are examined. Overall, these research projects reveal conflicting results and inconsistent findings which are interpreted as indicating that the role of sex in communication has not been clearly enough defined. In the second section, the popular beliefs regarding what constitutes women's speech--what is believed to be women's speech and what people believe it should be--are examined. The fact that women as speakers have been largely ignored by communications researchers is stressed, and it is suggested that popular beliefs can be useful as bases for research hypotheses. (LG)

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ED 075886

International Communication Association
Montreal, April 25-28, 1973

WOMEN'S SPEECH: SEPARATE BUT UNEQUAL?

by

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In generalizing about sex differences, Margaret Mead says that although societies differ in the way traits are assigned to men and women, all cultures set up societal norms for the sexes which go beyond the biological differences (1949:8).

There continues to be disagreement, of course, on which behavioral differences are caused by cultural influence and which by biological characteristics. For researchers in speech and linguistics, however, the first task is to search for possible differences in the ways men and women speak.

While there have recently been published a number of articles dealing with sexism in the English language (for example, the use of the dominant "he" meaning either male or female), there has been relatively little concern about the ways men and women use the English language differently. The sex role differences, so important to our culture, seem to have been largely ignored in communication research.

We need to consider not only the possibility of differences in grammatical phonological, and semantic aspects, but also possible differences in the verbal skills, instrumental use of language, and the relationship of non-verbal uses to verbal behavior. We need to ask if there are differences between the sexes in their linguistic competence. Do women control some speech structures or vocabulary that men lack or vice versa? We need to ask if there are differences

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in linguistic performance. Are there syntactic structures, vocabulary, phonological rules that, say, women might know but not use while men both know and use?

This paper will consider the evidence for there being systems of co-occurring, sex-linked, linguistic signals in the United States.[1] There are, of course, very important implications of such a finding for future linguistic research. Discussion of possible reasons for sex-related differences in speech will be limited; the emphasis will be on, first, what type of research in linguistic sex contrasts has been done and then on relevant material in folk-linguistics (with suggestions of further areas of study).

It has been easier to see the differences of language between the sexes in other cultures than in our own. For example, Furley (1944) says that sex contrasts in language usage are common among privitive tribes (though such contrasts are, he says, "barely discernible in the familiar languages of Europe"). He reports differences in phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary found in tribes in Siberia, Bengal, Bolivia, the United States (Indians), and the Lesser Antilles. There is, he writes, "linguistic evidence that in at least some scattered instances, the existence of these distinctions is associated with an assertation of masculine superiority" (218-223). Haas (1964) indicates that differences in the language spoken by man and women are common to many cultures. Although differences in grammar have been noticed, most differences seem to be either of vocabulary or of pronunciation (230-231).

Frazer (1900) writes about the special speech used by the women of the Caffres of South Africa. A Caffre wife must not pronounce the names of her father-in-law or the names of her mate's male relations in the ascending line,

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[1] Wayne Dickerson has suggested that the term "genderlects" be used to describe such systems.

or words which contain a syllable of any of those names. In the case of the Caffres, avoiding the emphatic syllable contained in many males names means that many words used by the women have a syllable changed and at times the entire words. Frazer's source states that the Caffres call this language Ukuteta Kwabafazi or "women's speech". Restrictions are evidently often imposed on the males of a tribe also (Frazer 404-441). In some cases it would appear that we could list certain words as being taboo for either men and/or women of these cultures.

Jespersen (1922) warns that differing lists of words restricted to either men or women do not necessarily make different languages. In his chapter "The Woman", he quotes Rochefort speaking of his experiences in the seventeenth century among the Caribbeans.

> The men have a great many expressions peculiar to them, which the women understand but never pronounce themselves. On the other hand, the women have words and phrases which the men never use, or they would be laughed to scorn. Thus it happens that in their conversation it often seems as if the women had another language than the men. (237)

He is saying that these systems are exclusive. There are categorical differences. Women have words which the men never use. In the United States many differences appear to be a matter of context and frequency. For example: Women perhaps know but do not use swear or curse words in the same context or with the same frequency as men. By the same token, women seem to use such words as "pretty", "cute", "lovely", and "oh dear" in contexts and in frequencies which differ from men.

In a 1969 article Shuy reviewed some of the small amount of research which had been done on women's speech in the United States. In a Detroit study mentioned in his review, Shuy, Wolfram, and Riley found clear sex differences in frequency of a linguistic feature. For example, males used "-in" (in place of "-ing") 62.2 per cent of the time compared to only 28.9 per cent of the

time by females. (In a New England study, Fischer [1964] found that girls used "-ing" more frequently, while boys used "-in" more frequently.) Shuy also reported that Wolfram in his work with Black English found that black females "have fewer f, t or ∅ relizations of th. . . . Females come closer than males at approximating the norm." Black females show greater tendency toward norms in their grammar, also, especially females of the lower middle class (Shuy 1969:7-12).

Labov (1966) also found that lower middle class New York women have a more extreme pattern of hypercorrection than men in the same class (310-314). Levine and Crockett (1966) found in a study of one American community that it was primarily the middle class women who lead the community toward the national speech norms. Trudgill (1972) found the same type of sex differentiation for speakers of urban British English. His study demonstrated that "women informant. . . . . use forms associated with the prestige standard more frequently than men." His study also discovered that male speakers place a high value on workin class non-standard speech. He offers several possible reasons for the finding that the women are more likely to use forms considered correct: (1) The subordinate position of women in English and American societies makes it "more necessary for women to secure their social status linguistically"; and (2) While man can be rated socially on what they do, women may be rated primarily on how they appear--so their speech is more important.

Another study (Sache, Liberman, Erickson), reported on by Eble, discovered in tests involving boys and girls that even when there is no difference in articulatory mechanism size, the sex of the speaker can be accurately identified from his/her speech. The researchers offered some possible reasons for this finding:

> If there is no average difference in articulatory mechanism size, the differences we have observed could arise from differential use of the anatomy. There could, for example, be hormonal control over certain aspects of the motor output. Or, the children could be learning culturally determined patterns that are viewed as appropriate for each sex. Within the limit of his anatomy, a speaker could change the format pattern by pronouncing vowels with phonetic variations, or by changing the configuration of the lips. (Eble 1972:9)

Goldberg (1968) conducted an experiment which found that women college students are predisposed to value the scholarly writings of men in their professional fields over the writings of women in the same fields.

Kester (1972) found that in a mixed group of people it is the men who talk much more than the women. She found that men interrupt women more often than women interrupt men.

Another study, done by Shuy, Baratz, and Wolfram in 1969, tested men's and women's subjective reactions to language performance, and found only an insignificant difference in men's and women's ability to identify the race of speakers heard on tape (Shuy 1969:12-14). Considering that the earlier study by Shuy (that I have mentioned) had shown clear sex contrasts in language use, with women using the prestige forms more often than men, Shuy found the results of this later study surprising. He gives several possible reasons for the evidence that subjective reactions and performance in speech are asymetrical, including the disappointing final one that "women continue to be one of the mysteries of the universe" (14). This reaction in itself offers a possible reason that so little research has been done. Firestone (1970) calls such a reaction part of an "exaggeration process" that provides for stereotyping of women as a peculiar type of human being that can't be understood or treated by the laws that govern mankind, i.e., males.

I could find few other studies dealing with sex contrasts in language.

There have been some published papers on the ratio of male to female stutterers. There is general agreement that there are more male stutterers than female. Here again, there is disagreement about whether biological or social factors are working. Some scholars have found evidence that stuttering is a hereditary trait but recent studies indicate that a male is more likely to stutter than a female because our culture places more importance on speech fluency in males than speech fluency in females. There is more pressure to speak well, and consequently the male feels more insecurity about his speech (cf. Goldman 1967).

There are a number of publications on sex-related differences in comprehension and retention of oral messages. While early studies found that males comprehended more than females in tests using oral messages, a recent study did not find this result. The authors of the recent study conclude that the inconsistent findings of this type of research

> demonstrate that the role of sex in communication has not been clearly defined. Further research should provide added insight into the role of sex in influencing communication effects, a problem which no researcher employing both males and females in communication research can ignore. (Kibler, Barker, and Gegala 1970)

Experiments dealing with possible sex-related differences in comprehension of compressed speech (McCracken 1969; Goldhaber and Weaver 1968) and in persuasibility (Bostrom and Kemp 1969:245-246) show the same conflict in results. There is evidently some factor or factors which have not been controlled in these tests.

I have mentioned, then, some of the few types of research projects which have been designed to find sex-related differences in speech. This is not to say that there has been no other word on the subject. The next section of my paper will try to pull together what can be called the folk-linguistics of

women's speech. There is much which can be said about the popular beliefs of what constitutes women's speech. These beliefs are not always articulated as beliefs, but a reading of etiquette manuals, speech books, cartoons, and novels will cause a stereotype of the woman as having particular characteristics of speech to emerge. Sometimes belief is confused with fact. While researching this paper I became aware that there seems to be a conflict not only between what women's speech really is like and what people think women's speech really is like, but also between what people think women's speech is like and what they think it should be like.

Great verbosity is not the prescribed behavior for females. The New Seventeen Book of Etiquette and Young Living described in a 1972 New Yorker advertisement as "AN IDEAL GRADUATION GIFT" ("social confidence for girls starts here") gives the "basic rules of conduct" for young girls who are interested in learning to "fit in." The book makes reference to a "survey of opinions" collected from boys. Some of these opinions, given as support for guidelines for girls, mention speech: "I hate girls who can't stop talking." "I like a girl who talks--but not a whole lot." "I like girls who listen to me without interrupting and who pay attention" (Haupt 1970:101-102). The editor adds some comments in support of the boys' comments: "Concentrate on the other person. Ask questions to draw him out. He'll love talking about himself." "Everybody loves to hear praise, and boys in particular." "Any male is happy to be the source of information" (100-101).

Girls are not supposed to talk as much as men. Perhaps a "talkative" woman is one that does talk as much as a man. A number of experiments suggest themselves. The total amount of talking time could be measured for men and women in a variety of situations. (In one study women have been found to have a

higher word count than men when giving descriptions of verbal displays. The experiment [Gall, et al. 1969] tested only one subject at a time; there were no interruptions.) There are several focus ideas for other possible experiments: Does the ratio of men to women make a difference in the relative verbosity of men and women? Is there a difference in the rate at which they produce words and sentences? Is there a difference in the number of times men and women in a group speak? And corresponding to this, is there a difference in the time of individual speeches? How much talking can a woman do before she is labelled "talkative"? This last question might involve a study of the types of sentence construction used, the volume of the voice, the topics of speech.

Jesperson cites proof from literature to support his discussion of the way women frequently leave sentences, especially exclamatory sentences, unfinished "Well, I never"; "I must say!" (251).

It may be that women ask more questions. In an article on the role of men and women as represented by children's books, U'ren is quoted on the fictional mother. "She enters a scene only to place a cake on the table and then disappear Or she plays foil to her husband by setting him up for his line. It is mother who asks, 'What shall we do?' and by doing so invites a speech from father" (Key, 1971b:170). Do women indeed use more questions and fewer declarative sentences than men? Is this one way of showing subordination, submission to men?

Lakoff thinks women do use the tag-question formation more than men. A tag, in Lakoff's words, is "midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question; it is less assertive than the former, but more confident than the latter" (15). It is used when a speaker does not have full confidence in his statement (or perhaps in himself [read: "herself"]). Instead of a firm declaration, the speaker asks for confirmation, and by being less decisive the

speaker leaves himself or herself an out. He or she is willing to be persuaded otherwise. "This speech convention is terrible, isn't it?" "That dress is pretty, don't you think?"

Lakoff hears another question that has much the same effect. Even if the women is asked a question for which she alone holds the information, she can turn her answer into a question. Lakoff gives this example: "'When will dinner be ready?' 'Oh, . . . around six o'clock . . . ?'" (18). Here, intonation rather than sentence structure has the woman indicate subordination and uncertainty.

I have heard other ways that women have of avoiding stating an opinion directly. "I kinda like that house." If someone points out to her the garage is too small and the fireplace mislocated, she can change her mind without too much difficulty. "That dress is rather pretty." The qualifier gives her an out. Do women actually use tag-questions more than men? Do their declarative sentences contain more qualifiers? In what situations? On what topics?

Lakoff finds a relationship between the tag-question and the tag-order. Women, she says, are more likely to compound a request (19-20). "Will you help me with these groceries, please?" is more polite than "Come help me" (and politeness, Lakoff believes, is a characteristic of women's speech); and the longer request stated as a question leaves a stronger possibility of a negative response. I have seen no empirical studies which deal with this possible difference in men's and women's speech.

Another technique women might use to talk without seeming to do much talkin is to lower the volume and pitch of their speech. We all know that at least in cartoons and novels whenever a number of women gather the resulting talk will be loud and high-pitched. In fact, such gatherings are often called

"hen sessions" and the speech is then called a "cackle." Do women change volume and pitch, depending on the situtation and the ratio of men and women present?

Pitch level depends upon the length, tension, and weight of the vocal cords. Women's cords are, in general, shorter, lighter, and stretched more tightly than men's. Pitch level is higher. Again, there seems to be a discrepancy between what really is and what is prescribed. The very fact that etiquette books (see Emily Post's Etiquette, 1960:39-40 and Haupt's The New Seventeen Book of Etiquette, 1970:104) warn women to avoid loud, high-pitched speaking indicates that performance does not always match the stated norms.

In an article entitled "Down with Sexist Upbringing," Pogrebin (1972) recognizes high pitch as a stereotyped attribute of females, closely associated with other undesirable, but feminine, traits. She writes, "Even Sesame Street, despite its noble educational intentions, teaches role rigidity along with the letters of the alphabet. . . . Boy monsters are brave and gruff. Girl monsters are high-pitched and timid" (28). The pitch of the female voice, which is usually higher because of the given physical traits of the vocal cords, is associated with the undesirable trait of timidness.

The higher-pitched voice is not associated in people's minds with serious topics. Mannes (1969) quotes a broadcaster giving a reason why in the United States so few women are employed as reporters by television networks: "As a whole, people don't like to hear women's voices telling them serious things" (204). Qualities other than pitch alone are evidently involved here; a handbook for announcers states that although women were employed by stations during the war, they were not retained once men were once again available, because "often the higher-pitched female voices could not hold listeners' attention for any length of time, while the lower-pitched voices were frequently vehicles for an

overly polished, ultrasophisticated delivery that sounded phoney." According to the handbook, "Women's delivery . . . is lacking in the authority needed for a convincing newscast" (quoted in Key 1971a:7).

Serious news, then, is not expected from females. It would be interesting to discover if women dislike having women's voices over radio and television to the same degree that men dislike hearing women's voices. Do the relatively few women who do have broadcasting jobs change their pitch and volume for their performances on the air to a greater degree than do male broadcasters? What kind of female voices are hired for broadcasting jobs? At what age does this preference for the male voice begin? And in what situations other than broadcasting? Dillard in writing about the use of peer recordings of speech to teach Standard English to speakers of Black English states: "Sex-grading has to be taken into account: will little boys be willing to learn seriously from records made by little girls, or by boys who impress them as being 'sissies'?" (1972:42). Note that he is not worried about girls being willing to learn "seriously" from records made by boys.

It would be interesting to see if female speech patterns once found in a variety of situtations in which women are in the subordinate positions are found in situations in which a woman speaks from some base of power. Perhaps the male-female division remains the most important consideration. One woman executive "in a top governmental position" has been quoted as saying,

> I always try to remember that . . . this is a man's world, and when I have big problems to discuss I work with them in such a manner that the first thing I know they're telling me their ideas, which are just exactly what I've been talking about . . . but in a roundabout way through the backdoor . . . it's their idea. (Cussler 1958:67)

This quotation is not of recent date. It would be interesting to try to discover the present speech habits of female executives. If, as our literature

suggests, women learn to control their speech to help convey an impression that they are living in the background, does the woman who has obtained a position of some power alongside or over men have these techniques perfected? Or, alternatively, has she other characteristics of speaking which have aided her in obtaining a position of power?

The material presented on the preceding pages indicates that there are many experiments to be run using the larger hypothesis that women's speech reflects the stereotyped roles of male and female in our society, i.e., women in a subservient, nurturing position in a male-dominated world. The tag-question, the relatively large number of questions asked, the intonation which makes a declarative sentence a question, the compounding of requests, the concern with unobtrusive pitch and volume, the triviality of subjects discussed over the air, the roundabout way of declaring ideas--all aspects of female speech, if they do indeed exist (for what I have been reporting is largely folk linguistics) for a significant segment of the female population, would indicate one way in which the sex roles are maintained.

There appear to be a number of other differences in the speech of men and women that do not seem as neatly categorized according to dominant-dominated characteristics.

Women are said to have a greater intonational range. "It is generally thought that women have more extremes of high and low intonation than do men and that there are some intonation patterns, impressionistically the 'whining, questioning, helpless' patterns, which are used predominatly by women" (Eble 1972:10).

There is some evidence--at least in jokes and novels--of a syntactic looseness in women's speech. (This is of course in comparison to men's speech.)

Jespersen writes of the "greater rapidity of female thought" and of the "superior readiness of speech of women"--indicating that the talk is done without much thought. (He offers material from a number of novels written by men as partial proof.) Sentences are not completed, he attests, and women are prone to jump from one idea to another (250-253). Ellmann (1968) writes of the stereotyped formlessness of women's speech as it is represented in the writing of such men as Joyce, Sartre, Mailer, and Hemingway. Molly Bloom and so many women who followed her in literary history have just let it all flow out. The same looseness is illustrated in a Saturday Review cartoon (October 30, 1971) in which a mini-skirted co-ed is saying in class to her professor (male):

> If we don't know how big the whole universe is, then I don't see how we could be sure how big anything in it is either, like the whole thing might not be any bigger than maybe an orange would be if it weren't in the universe, I mean, so I don't think we ought to get too uptight about any of it because it might be really sort of small and unimportant after all, and until we find out that everything isn't just some kind of specks and things, why maybe who needs it? (56)

Jespersen stated that the women can answer and talk more quickly because their vocabulary is more limited and more central--that is, women share a common vocabulary while men show more individuality in word choice. If Jespersen's book of 1922 seems to be referred to an inordinately large number of times in this paper it is because he was a prolific and respected writer on language (selections from his books are still anthologized) and because he wrote one of the very few studies available on women's speech. The statements that he makes about women's speech have not been proved or disproved. The support he uses is largely taken from literature.

"Everyone knows that the vocabulary of women differs considerably from that of men," wrote Grennough and Kittredge back in 1901. Yet one finds very little mention of this supposedly obvious difference. There is surprisingly little

interest in linguistic literature even about the use of curse words. Jespersen (1922) declares that "there can be no doubt that women exercise a great and universal influence on linguistic development through their instinctive shrinking from coarse and gross expressions and their preference for refined and (in certain spheres) veiled and indirect expressions." Instinctive, he says. Firestone (1970) offers another explanation for this particular difference in the vocabulary of men and women:

> As for the double standard about cursing: A man is allowed to blaspheme the world because it belongs to him to damn--but the same curse out of the mouth of a woman or a minor, i.e., an incomplete "man" to whom the world does not yet belong, is considered presumptuous, and thus an impropriety or worse. (100)

Men have a further claim to slang words in general. Flexner writes, in the preface to the Dictionary of American Slang:

> In my work on this dictionary, I was constantly aware that most American slang is created and used by males. Many types of slang words--including the taboo and strongly derogatory ones, those referring to sex, women, work, money, whiskey, politics, transportation, sports, and the like--refer primarily to male endeavor and interest. The majority of entries in this dictionary could be labeled "primarily masculine use." . . . Men also tend to avoid words that sound feminine or weak. Thus there are sexual differences in even the standard vocabularies of men and women. (1967:xii)

In her paradigm of terms for "prostitute," Stanley (1972) analyzed 200 words ("not by any means an exhaustive list") used by men to refer to women who sell themselves or who give themselves away.

This creation and use of slang is considered a healthy activity. According to Jespersen, "Men will certainly with great justice object that there is a danger of the language becoming languid and insipid if we are to content ourselves with women's expressions, and that vigour and vividness count for something" (247). Eric Partridge writes about the "vivid expressiveness" and

"vigorous ingenuity" expressed by the creation of the more than 1,200 English synonyms for the word "fuck." He says the words "bear witness to the fertility of English and to the enthusiastic English participation in the universal fascination of the creative act" (Stanley, 1972:6).

The fascination of the act may be universal, but in this country it is not to be spoken about by girls. Here is The New Seventeen on people who use "those four letter words":

> Boys find it especially repugnant when girls use these words. One boy described girls who use profanity as having nothing better to say. (106)

This material indicates that there is at least one major restriction on what women are supposed to say. Of course, women often object to the slang used by men. But, after all, "Boys will be boys." (Have you ever heard "Girls will be girls"?) There does seem to be a feeling that there is something instinctive or that there should be something instinctive--about the way men use coarse expressions and the way women avoid them.

Reik mentions what he thinks are differences in the ways men and women use the same words. A word such as "sex," "love," or "home" might have different connotations for the two sexes (1954:15). These differences could conceivably be found by the use of semantic differential tests.

A number of sources I consulted for this paper indicated that women do not use the same adjectives as men do, or they are used in different context or in different frequency. Native speakers will recognize "nice," "pretty," "darling, "charming," "sweet," "lovely," "cute," and "precious" as being words of approval used more frequently by women. As one male student in my speech class said, "If I heard a guy say something was 'cute,' I'd wonder about him." That is, his masculinity would be in question.

I found little mention of the use of adverbs in women's speech, although Jespersen (1922:249) says there are greater differences in the way the sexes use the adverb than the way they use the adjective--and he quotes Lord Chesterfield to prove it. (Chesterfield objected to the extensive use of "vastly" which women, he said, used to mean anything.) Several sources, including Jespersen, mentioned the use of hyperbole in women's speech, especially the intensive "so". Lakoff suggests that the heavily stressed "so" can be used like the tag-question to avoid full commitment to a statement. She feels that men use the intensive "so" most easily when the sentence is unemotional or nonsubjective (footnote on p. 3), as in "That car is so beautiful." Since being emphatic is not seemingly a characteristic of women's speech, it would be useful to determine in what situations and with what topics women do use the intenstive "so". It might be that it is used in cases where agreement with another speaker is being made. Or where disagreement is unlikely.

Hyperbole perhaps is not a characteristic peculiar to women's speech. Flenner (1967:xii) writes that men enjoy using hyperbole in slang. He continues "Under many situations, men do not see or care to express fine shades of meaning: a girl is either a knockout or a dog." (At the end of this paragraph Flexner says that men like to make themselves the active doer, to use the transitive verb. Here is another syntax pattern to check.

What I have discussed thus far has been primarily concerned with spoken words. There is some evidence that there are parallel differences in the written work of men and women. I have already mentioned a study involving the way scholarly writing by women is viewed by college women.

Ellmann (1968) in writing about fiction states the stereotyped dichotomy: the masculine mode of writing contains the properties of reason and knowledge,

the feminine writing states feelings and intuitions (158). Ellmann calls this dichotomy "unreal." Reason and knowledge, feelings and intuitions are difficult things to test for, based as they are on a culture's idea of what is real. But perhaps there are lesser tests to run. For example, is the dialogue different for the sexes in the novels? And do women writers treat the dialogue differently? Much of the support Jespersen used for his chapter on the speech of women consisted of dialogue taken from novels by male writers. Does this dialogue correspond with what is actually said by women and men? George Eliot used Dorothea's speech (in Middlemarch) to indicate changes in Dorothea's feeling of self-assurance as she falls under the dominance of her husband. Her use of intensifying adverbs, for example, persists, but she loses her ability to use figurative speech--or she refrains from using it. As she is unable to get positive responses from her husband, she stops trying to gain agreement by means of her former method of using negatives ("Will you not now do . . ." [which seems a feminine, that is, a submissive construction to begin with]), and starts asking rhetorical questions for which no agreement is required. In her loneliness she uses much hyperbole--to herself. This analysis from Oldfield (1967:63-86 passim) provides an interesting look at how a female novelist made a woman use her speech to indicate subordination--so she was able to still use speech as an outlet.

Poetry, letter-writing, and reporting in the media would be other areas of communication to study. Can the written work of women be recognized by subject, sentence structure, and/or word choice?

The possibility that there may be major differences in the manner that men and women speak means that many generalizations about "speech" in our culture need to be reconsidered. The task of looking at the various aspects of

interpersonal communication for possible differences seems enormous. Perhaps here is a place where Hymes' list of the components of speech will be very useful. Research involving such components as "channel," "keys," "setting," "participants," "topic," "ends," and "norms of interaction" of women's speech might provide fascinating material. For example: Do women use speech for different purposes than men? What behavior accompanies the speech of men and women? Cronin, quoted by Brown and Gilman, indicates that subordination is expressed in more than words:

> The repertoire [of Americans] includes the boyish grin, the deprecatory cough, the unfinished sentence, the appreciative giggle, the drooping shoulders, the head-scratch and the bottom-waggle. (268)

Some of these actions seem sex-related (a giggling, bottom-waggling male would be seen in our culture as expressing more than subordination). Robin Morgan and many other activist Women Liberation members say they must remind themselves to smile less as they listen and speak; the smile was one way their bodies indicated willing subordination and eagerness to get along with others, especially with males.

All of Hymes' components need to be considered. And it seems imparative that they are considered within a speech act.

This paper has stressed the fact that women as speakers have been largely ignored in communications research, but that there is a sizable amount of information that can be called folk-view: how people think women speak or how people think women should speak. Although these beliefs will make useful bases for hypotheses for research, it must be realized that women are individuals. It is fairly well-recognized now that women have received a large part of their identification from males. Researchers interested in studying the speech

of women as women (not as part of the category termed "man"--said to be an inclusive term but all too often actually meaning "male") must be careful not to make the error, almost as serious, of grouping all women together. Labov and Bernstein have made linguists conscious of the necessity of recognizing the socio-economic status of speakers. The origin and race of women speakers might be important factors which bring diversity into the larger category of "women's speech." Age may be another important interacting factor--as religion might be.[2]

Margaret Mead has suggested that we need to try to disabuse our minds of assuming stereotypes to be fact and rather to begin asking some "open-ended exploratory questions" about males and females in our society (1949:30, 135-136). This paper suggests that some of those questions might be derived from those very stereotypes, the folk linguistics of speech that exist in our society.

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[2]This suggestion was made by Fred Hilpert.

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